

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SANTO 02260 032045Z

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R 032010Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0617

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 2260

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION RESPONDS TO PRESIDENT'S CALL FOR
NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT

REF: SD -2020, SD-2127

1. IN A RADIO BROADCAST MAY 31, EX-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE FOR THE SANTIAGO ACCORD, SILVESTRE ANTONIO GUZMAN, OUTLINED THE CONDITIONS THE ACCORD DEMANDED BEFORE AGREEING TO JOIN PRESIDENT BALAGUER'S "NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT" WHICH THE LATTER PROPOSED IN HIS POST-VICTORY SPEECH ON MAY 21. GUZMAN ASSERTED THAT THE FOUR ACCORD PARTIES WOULD JOIN THE GOVERNMENT ONLY IF NEW CONGRESSIONAL AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS WERE CALLED. PRIOR TO PARTICIPATION IN THESE ELECTIONS, GUZMAN ADDED, HOWEVER, THE GODR WOULD HAVE TO IMPLEMENT THE FOLLOWING FIVE DEMANDS:

(A) CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM WHICH WOULD PROHIBIT PRESIDENTIAL REELECTION. THIS AMENDMENT COULD ONLY BE SUBSEQUENTLY RECHANGED BY A UNANIMOUS DECISION OF A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY,

(B) FULFILLMENT OF BALAGUER'S PROMISE TO RELEASE "POLITICAL PRISONERS,"

(C) LEGALIZATION OF ALL LEFTIST PARTIES, ON THE CONDITION
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PAGE 02 SANTO 02260 032045Z

THAT THEY AGREE TO FUNCTION WITHIN A LEGAL FRAMEWORK,

(D) RETURN OF ALL POLITICAL EXILES, INCLUDING EX-GENERAL ELIAS WESSIN Y WESSIN, AND

(E) RESTRUCTURING THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD (JCE) TO INCORPORATE MEMBERS OF ALL POLITICAL PARTIES.

2. GUZMAN WENT ON TO SAY THAT MUNICIPAL AND CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS WOULD PROVIDE A VEHICLE FOR THE POPULAR WILL TO BE MANIFESTED AND THUS REINFORCE THE AUTHORITY OF THE PRESIDENT. WITHOUT NEW ELECTIONS, HE WARNED, THERE WAS DANGER OF THE PEOPLE TAKING TO THE STREETS TO "RESTORE THEIR RIGHTS AND THEIR JUST DEMANDS." GUZMAN CALLED FOR A "PACT OF HONOR" BETWEEN THE ACCORD AND THE GOVERNMENT TO REDUCE THEIR RESPECTIVE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS TO A MINIMUM "TO PREVENT ACTS OF VIOLENCE."

3. COMMENT. GUZMAN'S RESPONSE TO BALAGUER'S MAY 21 OVERTURES REFLECTED THE ACCORDS'S RELATIVELY WEAK POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE GOVERNMENT. HAVING ALREADY DECLARED THE ELECTIONS "NULL AND VOID" AND THE BALAGUER GOVERNMENT "ILLEGAL," THE ACCORD IS APPARENTLY NOW READY TO ACCEPT BALAGUER AS PRESIDENT FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS. IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THE ACCORD REALLY EXPECTS THE GODR TO ACCEDE TO ALL OF ITS FIVE DEMANDS, PARTICULARLY THE RETURN OF WESSIN AND THE LEGALIZATION OF ALL LEFTIST PARTIES, BOTH ANATHEMA TO THE ARMED FORCES. MOREOVER, EVEN IF THESE CONDITIONS WERE MET, IT SEEMS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT BALAGUER WOULD CONSENT TO NEW ELECTIONS WHICH WOULD NOT ONLY BE EXPENSIVE AND TIME-CONSUMING, BUT WOULD ALSO BE POLITICALLY UNSETTLING AND WOULD MOST LIKELY GIVE RISE TO THE SAME ALLEGATIONS OF FRAUD WHICH AROSE FROM THE MAY 16 BALLOTING.

4. NONETHELESS, DOMINICAN POLITICS ARE FULL OF SURPRISES AND NEGOTIATED SOLUTIONS TO STRICTLY POLITICAL PROBLEMS, HOWEVER IMPLAUSIBLE THEY MAY APPEAR ON THE SURFACE, ARE CHARACTERISTIC OF THIS COUNTRY. THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME POLITICAL ARRANGEMENT BEING HAMMERED OUT BY BOTH SIDES SHOULD THEREFORE NOT BE DISCOUNTED.

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PAGE 03 SANTO 02260 032045Z

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